



Kisiyiniw Pîkiskwêwin Pîyêsiw Iskotêw

Elder's Voices Carried by Thunderbird Spirit's Fire

Preface:

This web site is a collection of 16 stories from the Dene (Dene Suline) & Cree (Nêhiyawak) communities in Northwest Saskatchewan . Joseph Naytowhow (Sturgeon Lake, SK), a Cree speaker, has been gathering these stories from Dene and Cree Elders since October of 1995. Saskatchewan Elders say each of the poles of the tipi represent a moral value. Represented in this collection of stories are values borrowed from this model - reflective of both Cree and Dene worldviews. This site has four titles: Cree and Dene with English translations for each. The stories are also in both Dene and Cree with English. Welcome!

Elder's Biography:

Joseph George Merasty was born at Onion Lake First Nation, SK on February 19, 1916. He was also baptized a Roman Catholic shortly after his birth. He moved to Flying Dust First Nation at a very early age and has been a resident there ever since.

Joseph spent twelve years of his life at the Delmas Indian Residential School in Delmas, SK. He went home for holidays during the twelve years of schooling. The experience at the residential school was not always good.

Joseph joined the Saskatoon Light Infantry when he was in his twenties because war had broken out across the ocean. At the time of his recruitment he was working in the hayfields near Meadow Lake. After the war, Joseph took on odd jobs working as a farmer, carpenter and laborer.

Joseph is a war veteran and is called upon from time to time by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSIN) to attend meetings organized by the FSIN Veterans Association. He is also an active Elder for the Flying Dust First Nation.

He married Mrs. Glecia Bear on September 5, 1994. They enjoyed a life together on the Flying Dust First Nation until her passing away on September 10, 1998. Joseph had three children from a previous relationship, all have since passed away. In 1980, Joseph adopted one of Glecia Bear's grandchildren; Kenny Bear (affectionately known as Napisis, by Joe).

A lover of crossword puzzles and reading, Joseph keeps himself occupied when indoors. Otherwise, he spends most of his time outdoors landscaping and doing repairs and other odd jobs around his home.



Nanâskomowin

(Thankfulness)

Elder's Name:

Joseph Merasty

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1. It was a long time ago. I was twenty-five years of age at the time. I was stacking hay up north of Meadow Lake by the Beaver River when a foxtail floating through the air went into my right eye. Unable to get the foxtail to work itself out, I was rushed to Meadow Lake for treatment at the agency office. After being taken care of by the doctor I was informed that local people, Aboriginal and Métis, were being recruited for the Canadian army. This meant front line combat.



1. kayâs aspin ôma, nîstanaw niyânosâp ê-itahtopiponêyân êkospî. ê-wîstihkêyân mêkwâc amisko-sîpîhk kîwêtinohk ohci paskwâw sâkahikanihk. maskosîs ê-pisiniyân ôma êkwa namôya ê-kî-otinamân, namôya mîna nânitaw ê-wî-isi-wayawîpayik, ê-kî-itohtahikawiyân paskwâw sâkahikanihk, sônîyâw-okimânâhk maskihkîwiyniw ta-wâpamak. êkosi! êkota kâ-pêhtamân nêhiyawak mîna âpihtaw-kosisânak ê-otinihcik ta-nitawi-nôtinikêcik, akâmaskîhk.

2. Sparked by interest and curiosity, I filled out a form and was recruited immediately. I had signed up for World War I. Jim Merasty, Alex Bear and my brother, Alphonse Merasty were other Flying Dust members who also enlisted. First, we would all be trained through the Saskatoon Light Infantry (SLI). Then I would be on my way to the slit trenches in Italy, Sicily and Holland as a machine gunner (MG).

2. mitoni nicihkêyihên, êkosi nîmasinahên masinahikan, ê-masinahosoyân ta-nitawi-nôtinikêyân nîsta, êkospî oskac kâ-nôtinitohk. Jim Merasty awa pêyak, Alex Bear, êkwa nîcisân Alphonse Merasty wîstawâw kî-masinahosowak. êkosi nikiskiwahamâkawinân ôtê Saskatoon Light Infantry (SLI) ohci. êkotê ohci Italy, Sicily, êkwa Holland ê-at-îtohtêyân.



3. On one of the expeditions that took us through Italy, our unit had to go along a very narrow road trailing on a mountain-side in a brin-carrier. The driver had a limited view from inside the truck which allowed only a narrow slit for a front window. On the one side of the road it was sheer cliff. The brin-carrier suddenly took a spin off the road. As the brin-carrier spun it veered towards the cliff and hung half way over teetering like a see-saw. I tell you, we were scared. Luckily, we had a good driver and he maneuvered the brin-carrier out of danger.

4. We had another close call one day on the Adriatic Coast of Italy as I could not remember the password to enter the castle on the hill our regiment was guarding. The regiment wanted a reply, but I was not told of the new password. After two tries, one of the men in my section hollered 'Judy' - the proper password. Luck was on our side that day. If we hadn't said the proper password our own men guarding the castle would have had no other choice but to shoot.

5. During our time off, we would visit beautiful museums that had been abandoned. Although some looting took place, the Canadian army had a strict ruling against stealing. Other places I had a chance to visit during war were the ruins in Rome and the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

...The Canadian Army had a strict rule against stealing.

"...The Canadian Army, namôya ohci pakitinamwak awiya êkosita-itôtamiyit."

3. pêyakwâyak kâ-pimâcihoyâhk Italy isi, mitoni ê-cacayâwâsik mêskanaw kâ-pimâcihoyâhk sisonê wacîhk. namôya tâpwê kwayask kî-wâpahtam mêskanaw ana opamihcikêw êyikohk ê-apisâsiki wâsênâmânisa otâpânâskohk. mitoni napatê ê-misi-kîskahcâk mêskanaw, kâ-patotêpayiyâhk êkotê isi. âpihtaw êyikohk akocin otâpânâsk, kêkâc ê-cahkâskopayit. kwayask ani nisêkisinân. nitaki ê-nihtâ-pamihcikêw opamihcikêw, kwayask kâwi ê-âhcipitât otâpânâskwa.

4. kihtwâm mîna kêkâc nikî-misihonân, êkotê Italy, ê-wanikiskisiyân tânisi t-êtwêyan icwêwinis mâna pêyak ê-âpacihtâyâhk t-êtwêyâhk tôhkiskêyimikawiyâhk. ê-kakwêcimikawiyâhk, êkwa namôya niya nikiskêyihên; nîswâw piyisk ê-kakwêcimikawiyân, pêyak niwîcêwâkan kâ-misi-têpwê, "Judy," êwako êsâni icwêwinis anima takî-itwêyân. nimironikânân ani êkospî. êkâ ayisk nânitaw kî-ay-itwêyâhk êkosi piko ta-kî-pâskisokawiyâhk.

5. ôma êkâ kîkway k-ôsîhtâyâhk, k-âywêpiyâhk, misiwê mâna nikî-pâ-pâmohtânân ê-wâh-wâpahtamâhk kayâsi-wâskahikana, kâ-sâsîkwaskatahamihk. âtiht mâna kî-kâh-kimotiwak, mâka wiyawâw, "The Canadian Army," namôya ohci pakitinamwak awiya êkosi ta-itôtamiyit. kotaka mîna Rome nîkî-wâh-wâpahtênân wâskahikana, "misi-kayâs-âya" êkwa, "The Leaning Tower of Pisa," mîna.



6. Alphonse, my brother suffered from shell-shock on one expedition. The commanding officer, Sergeant Bailey (who now resides in St. Walburg) noticed Alphonse was missing and found him covered over with sand that was thrown from the blast. Unable to recover from the shock of the blast, Alphonse was assigned to Regiment Police. He remained there until he took a fatal bullet from a sniper.

7. I felt fortunate when WWII was finally over. I was so happy to have my feet back on this land and the feeling of peace and freedom was a welcome relief upon my return to Canada.

8. There is a lot more to tell, but it would take a long time to write it all down. That is all I will tell you as I am not one for telling stories.

6. Alphonse awa mîna pâyakwâw kî-micimisêkisiw. nitôkimâminân ana Sergeant Bailey (St. Walburg) êkwa ayâw êwako; êyakwâna kâ-kwêtawêyimât êkwa kâ-nitawi-miskawât ê-ayâhôkoyit asiskiy, ê-ohpwêkotêk. namôya ohci miywâyâw kâ-kî-micimisêkisit anima, êkosi simâkanis kî-itapiw, êkota kî-atoskêw iskohk kâ-pistahoht nanânisk ê-isi-tasinamiyit anihi kâ-kî-pistahokot.

7. mitoni ninanâskomon ê-nahipayik kâwi ta-takohtêyân kâ-pôni-nôtinitohk. miton âni nimiywêyihên ê-tahkoskêyân ôta askîhk kâwi. ê-kiyâmwahk mîna tipêyimisowin ta-wâpahtamân ispî kâ-takohtêyân Canada.

8. mistahi kiyâpic nikâh-âcimon mâka kinwêsîskamik nikâh-nôcihtân ta-masinahamân. êkosi piko pitamâ kâ-wihtamâtân. namôya tâpwê niya ninihtâ-âcimon.